



## Small Decisions Can Result in More Layoffs

Posted by **Pierluigi Oliverio** on Monday, November 23, 2009

Last week, at the city council meeting, I removed an item from the consent calendar on the agenda for discussion. As you may remember from my blog about San Jose's million-dollar golf nets, consent calendar items do not have individual discussion, but rather are voted on all at the same time. If one wants to discuss a consent item, you have to "remove" it for discussion.

The item I removed was asking \$993,876 for the library to spend over the course of seven years on an online tutoring service for kids. Nearly a million dollars is a significant amount of money. The \$993,876 was not restricted funds and could have been spent on librarians instead. My comment/question to the council was: If we know we are going to have to do layoffs of library staff on July 1, 2010 to balance the budget, then maybe we should hold off on discretionary spending so we can retain staff to keep our libraries open. This expenditure is approximately two librarians salary each year for seven years. My comment fell on deaf ears and the council voted to spend this money; I voted against this expenditure.

When it comes to the libraries, the core deliverable to me is that libraries are open as many hours a week as we can afford, so users can access information and have a place to study. Any and all other programming should be funded after libraries are open seven days a week. If we have funds left over after libraries are open seven days a week then we can start evaluating the option of adding different programs. Until then, the City's money should be used to keep libraries open with staff.

The online tutoring service could be canceled from year to year; however, good luck ever canceling a program/service once it starts.

On another note, I posted a survey last week regarding the Redevelopment Agency (RDA) budget. The RDA board adopts the final budget on Dec. 8. A person shared with me that the question I posted below (which appears on the survey) was "biased." I shared that the information I gave was factual, not biased. I thought I would share the question with you here. I have added commentary in bold parenthesis:

The Redevelopment Agency has spent \$774 million on housing (**true**) making San Jose the number-one provider of affordable housing in the state of California (**true**) by financing 18,000 units (**true**) of affordable housing while neighboring cities do next to nothing for affordable housing. (Neighboring Cities have not met the Association Bay Area Governments (ABAG) affordable housing targets, while San Jose has exceeded overall ABAG affordable housing targets). With so much given to affordable housing and so many people in need of jobs (**12.5 percent unemployment**), should the RDA borrow money from affordable housing reserves this year, as allowed by state law (**true**), to be spent instead on economic development to help create jobs?

The Redevelopment budget survey can be found [here](#). It closes this week.

Happy Thanksgiving San Jose.

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